

Message Text

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R 141157Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8475
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
DIA WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KHARTOUM 4282

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PEPR, MASS, EAID, ECON, SU, US
SUBJECT: U.S.-SUDAN RELATIONS: THE VIEW FROM KHARTOUM

REF: KHARTOUM 3897 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: U.S.-SUDAN RELATIONS HAVE EXPANDED DRAMATICALLY SINCE
RELATIONS WERE NORMALIZED IN MID-1976. WE NOW HAVE BEGUN MILI-
TARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS WHICH ONCE FULLY IMPLE-
MENTED WILL BE AMONG MOST IMPORTANT IN AFRICA. AMERICAN COMPANIES
HAVE BEGUN TO PLAY IMPORTANT ROLE IN DEVELOPMENT OF SUDAN AND
THEIR POSITION HERE ALSO LIKELY EXPAND. SUDANESE ARE SHOWING
CONSTANTLY INCREASING INTEREST IN AMERICAN CULTURAL AND EDUCA-
TIONAL ACTIVITIES. CLOSE POLITICAL RELATIONS REFLECT THESE
EXPANDING RELATIONSHIPS AND BROAD CONSENSUS ON PRINCIPAL INTER-
NATIONAL ISSUES. HOWEVER, FOR SUDANESE THEMSELVES THERE IS IN

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ADDITION AN IMPORTANT SYMBOLIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECT TO
RELATIONS WITH U.S., IMPORTANCE OF WHICH SHOULD NOT RPT NOT
BE UNDERESTIMATED. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT SUDANGOV AND
SUDANESE GENERALLY VALUE GOOD RELATIONS WITH U.S. HIGHLY AND
THEY WILL WISH TO SEE TIES BETWEEN US EXPANDED EVEN MORE.
NIMEIRI'S VISIT TO U.S. IS A SIGNIFICANT STEP IN THEIR IMPLE-
MENTATION OF THIS POLICY. END SUMMARY

1. TWO YEARS AGO WHEN BILATERAL RELATIONS WERE NORMALIZED, FEW INDIVIDUALS WOULD HAVE PREDICTED THAT U.S.-SUDAN RELATIONS WOULD BE AS CLOSE OR EXTENSIVE AS THEY ARE TODAY. THOUGH FROM SUDANESE POINT OF VIEW PROGRESS HAS BEEN EXCRUCIATINGLY SLOW AT TIMES, FACT REMAINS THAT WE HAVE BEGUN SIZEABLE MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS. INDEED, ONCE PROGRAMS PRESENTLY BEING CONSIDERED ARE APPROVED AND IMPLEMENTED, U.S. MILITARY SALES AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN SUDAN ARE LIKELY TO BE AMONG LARGEST IN AFRICA. THIS IS REFLECTED IN STILL SMALL BUT IMPORTANT ROLE OF AMERICAN PRIVATE SECTOR HERE. OUR COMPANIES, OFTEN SELECTED AND FINANCED BY FOREIGN, NON-AMERICAN DONORS OR INVESTORS, ARE PLAYING KEY ROLE IN DEVELOPMENT OF SUDAN. OIL EXPLORATION EFFORT BY CHEVRON, IF SUCCESSFUL, COULD TRANSFORM COUNTRY. IN ADDITION, CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL TIES ARE EXPANDING. THERE IS, IN SHORT, A WIDE RANGE OF ACTIVITIES WHERE USG, AMERICAN COMPANIES AND OTHER U.S. INSTITUTIONS ARE ASSISTING SUDAN. THIS ASSISTANCE IS WELCOME AND IS GROWING. IT FORMS AN IMPORTANT BASE OF OVERALL U.S.-SUDAN RELATIONSHIP.

2. THERE IS ANOTHER BASE, HOWEVER, WHICH IS LESS EASY TO DESCRIBE AND MEASURE. WE BELIEVE SUDANESE, ESPECIALLY NIMEIRI, ATTACH CONSIDERABLE SYMBOLIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE TO RELATIONS WITH U.S. FACT IS, U.S. LEADERSHIP POSITION IS IMPORTANT TO SUDAN. WE ARE A SUPERPOWER AND
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THAT COUNTS FOR GREAT DEAL TO SUDANESE LEADERSHIP. GIVEN U.S. POSITION IN WORLD AFFAIRS, SUDANESE VALUE FRIENDLY, COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH USG. THIS PROVIDES PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT AT TIME WHEN THEY DEEPLY CONCERNED OVER SOVIET OBJECTIVES IN MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA. MOREOVER, THEY VALUE USG SUPPORT EVEN VIS-A-VIS FRIENDS SUCH AS SAUDI ARABIA. WE BELIEVE, MOREOVER, THAT SUDANGOV CONSIDERS ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH USG IMPORTANT AS MATTER OF PRIDE TO SUDANESE THEMSELVES. FOR NIMEIRI HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER ITSELF IS IMPORTANT BEYOND WHATEVER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES ARE DISCUSSED. FOR NIMEIRI AND SUDANESE LEADERSHIP GENERALLY IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE SEEN, BY FRIENDS, ANTAGONISTS, AND PUBLIC ITSELF, TO BE CLOSE TO AND CONSULTED BY USG, ESPECIALLY AT PRESIDENTIAL LEVEL.

3. WHAT ARE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS PERCEPTION BY SUDANESE OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH U.S.? IN FIRST INSTANCE IT MEANS SUDANESE WILL CONTINUE TO SEEK ACCESS TO AMERICAN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER, INVESTMENT, MILITARY COOPERATION AND EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES. THEY WILL, FOR EXAMPLE, EXPECT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND BE DEEPLY DISAPPOINTED IF NONE IS FORTHCOMING SINCE IT WILL BE CONSIDERED INCONSISTENT

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WITH OVERALL CLOSE RELATIONSHIP. ON OTHER HAND, THERE WILL
BE READINESS AMONG SUDANESE TO COOPERATE WITH U.S. ON
POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC MATTERS. OVERALL ENVIRONMENT, IN
THAT SENSE, FOR USG AND PRIVATE AMERICANS AS WELL WILL BE
POSITIVE AND FRIENDLY.

4. RELATIONSHIP WILL BE HINDERED OR CONSTRAINED BY PHYSICAL
LIMITS ON WHAT CAN BE DONE EITHER DUE TO PROBLEMS HERE SUCH
AS LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE OR FINANCE OR, FOR EXAMPLE, BY
THE KINDS OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS THAT IMPESE EXIMBANK
ACTIVITY WITH SUDAN. ON SOME REGIONAL AND THIRD WORLD
ISSUES, THERE WILL BE DIFFERENCES. BY AND LARGE, HOWEVER,
U.S.-SUDANESE RELATIONSHIPS SHOULD CONTINUE TO DEVELOP IN
POSITIVE MANNER.

5. PROBABLY THE MOST DIFFICULT ASPECT OF BILATERAL RELATION-
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SHIP OVER NEXT FEW YEARS IS THAT SUDANESE WILL WISH TO DEVELOP CLOSER RELATIONS AND HAVE LARGER AMERICAN PRESENCE HERE THAN MAY BE REALISTIC GIVEN CURRENT MOODS IN U.S. THEY WILL WANT MORE AID AT A TIME WHEN CONGRESS AND PUBLIC FEEL AID PROGRAMS SHOULD BE REDUCED. THEY WILL WANT CLOSE POLITICAL RELATIONS AT A TIME WHEN MANY AMERICANS ARE STILL REACTING TO VIETNAM AND WHAT LED TO IT. IN SHORT, SUDANESE ARE BUCK-STRONG TRENDS IN U.S. AWAY FROM FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT. BECAUSE OF THEIR CONCERN OVER SOVIET OBJECTIVES, THEIR DESIRE TO DEVELOP THEIR ECONOMY AND THEIR NOTION OF WHAT AMERICA'S LEADERSHIP ROLE REQUIRES OF USG, SUDANESE WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND NEW AMERICAN MOOD AND USG RESPONSE TO IT. THE INTERPLAY OF THESE APPARENTLY OPPOSING TRENDS, I THINK, WILL BE DOMINANT THEME IN U.S.-SUDAN RELATIONS OVER NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS.

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